careful study of the record it contains of the activities of the several departments of the State. In the hope that it may be of some little help to you in your study I shall endeavour now to lead you through whatever may be of interest or importance in its chapters. Before doing so, however, let me make a brief comment upon the proceedings of last year's Assembly. You have already been supplied with a statement of what has been done during the last twelve months on the representations made at the last two sessions. Heads of departments and officers of the Secretariat have laboured long and earnestly in finding ways and means to meet your requests. I sincerely trust that the statement will satisfy you that action has been taken or is being attempted in every possible direction and, more than all, I trust that you will see emerging from it a sincere intention on the part of Her Highness's Government to regard your representations as a serious business of State. In the course of last year's proceedings I dropped a hint to some of the members that it would make for facility of disposal and practicability of compliance if the representations of each member were confined to a few carefully selected requirements and if small matters, which it is within the power of local officers and heads of departments to carry out, were not brought before this Assembly. I see in the lists of subjects of which you have given notice a formidable array of many matters, great and small. May I hope that you will make a judicious selection from them when the time comes for actual representation.

2. Revenue. Now let us go back to the Administration Report. We have to congratulate ourselves that Nature was bountiful in 1102. It was a good year in all directions: in agriculture, in trade, in commerce and in public health. The finances of the year reflect this happy position. The budget for 1102 estimated a total income of something over Rs. 215½ lakhs. As a matter of fact, when the accounts for the year were closed, the revenue was found to have mounted up to Rs. 238½ lakhs. The bulk of the increase was due to an all-round healthy growth in favourable circumstances and to a better percentage of collection.

3. Expenditure. Before the year opened we had planned to spend about Rs. 208 lakhs. When the accounts of the year were made up, the actual expenditure was found to be between Rs. 204 and Rs. 205 lakhs. The year thus yielded a surplus of about Rs. 34 lakhs or Rs. 11 lakhs more than the previous year's surplus. A comfortable bank balance commands respect and inspires confidence ; and nobody can question the wisdom of husbanding our resources against the time when larger calls attend upon administrative progress. It is a satisfying thought that the Government felt no need during the year to stint expenditure in any direction whatsoever.

4. Assets and Liabilities. You will no doubt be interested in learning the State's position generally in the matter of assets and liabilities as apart from the year's transactions alone. The assets of 1102 stood at Rs. 297·29 lakhs and the liabilities at Rs. 160·7 lakhs showing a closing balance of Rs. 136·59 lakhs registered, in the language of the Audit Department, as the Government Account. The closing balance of the previous year was Rs. 103·37 lakhs. This does not mean that the total available capital at the disposal of the State is only Rs. 136·59 lakhs. There are sinking funds earmarked for particular purposes amounting to Rs. 48·76 lakhs, which are exhibited as a liability but in reality constitute an asset available for the discharge of specific obligations. Similarly, savings bank deposits with the Government, which stood at Rs. 60 lakhs at the close of 1102, are also rightly exhibited as a liability ; but Government have the turnover of this money in return for which they pay interest. At the end of the year the assets included fixed deposits with banks to the extent of over Rs. 10 lakhs and investments in Government of India securities at face value amounting to Rs. 165·33 lakhs. I may explain that the total assets as shown do not include large amounts laid out over a long course of years on buildings, irrigation systems and railways. All these, of course, have a capital value although not readily realisable.

5. Lands for landless Classes. In the Administration Report there is a remark that, of the 3,511 acres assigned to the landless classes, 2,250 acres or 64 per cent were registered in the name of Pulayas who, for the most part, are the actual

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tillers of the soil. A misfortune has befallen these poor people. The great majority of them lived on the land they tilled and for uncounted generations were cared for by the landlords. With the partition of property, following upon recent social legislation, estates came to be split up and to a great extent the holdings became so small that apparently in many cases the proprietor found himself unable to house and maintain the Pulaya field labourer. The result is that numbers of them have been left homeless and have to fend for themselves. The needs of these poor but indispensable people have to be met. This does not mean that other communities of the landless classes are being shut out. 15,892 acres have been set apart for distribution and 511 acres were allotted during the year. The result is not satisfactory. At this rate it will take thirty years to apportion out the earmarked area. The remedy is not simple. A protector who is not an officer of the Land Revenue Department is necessarily handicapped since all the processes of land registration are at present under law and rule vested in the Land Revenue Department and no officer not actually exercising the functions of a land revenue officer can effectively deal with the matter. The land revenue officials already have their time fully occupied. The Government propose to introduce more effective arrangements from the beginning of the approaching financial year. The appointment of a whole-time protector of the depressed classes, as the phrase goes, will not, careful investigation has convinced me, by itself solve the difficulty.

6. Lands for Ex-service Men. The striking disparity between 4,320 acres reserved for ex-service men and the lands actually granted to them, only 19 acres, led me to direct an investigation of the causes which defeated the fulfilment of the Government's intentions in this matter. A misapprehension was mainly responsible for the failure. The land revenue officers were under the impression that *varavila* or the full purchase price of the land applied for had to be paid by the men and that the concession extended only to preferential treatment and the reservation of areas. The rules were not clear. The misapprehension has since been removed. It has been made clear that the lands are to be allotted cost free and the time for registration has been extended to the 21st November 1928. Every effort is now being made to accelerate registry but delays are sometimes found to be unavoidable because of mistakes in applications : lands outside the reserved area, lands without sufficient indication of location and lands already in the possession of others are sometimes applied for.

7. Salt. It is the hope and the aim of the Government to see the whole of the salt required for consumption in the State manufactured in the State. In 1101 we had to import 310,234 maunds of salt from Bombay and 586,504 maunds of salt from Tuticorin, our own production having been only 407,466 maunds. Things were better in 1102. Our fourteen licensed factories manufactured 668,991 maunds. This is the largest output on record and is the result of better brine and more suitable weather conditions. The imports of Bombay salt dropped to 230,539 maunds and of Tuticorin salt to 322,594 maunds. We hope to do still better this year. The Chief Engineer and the Excise Commissioner are in consultation with the factory owners seeking means to stimulate the industry.

8. Abkari. You will find the policy of the Government in the matter of arrack and toddy consumption in the State outlined in the Administration Report and the measures taken during 1102 in pursuance of that policy are there stated. A further step forward in the cause of temperance has since been decided upon. The auction sale of shops and the licensing of trees for tapping for the next biennial contracts have to be taken in hand in a few months' time. In sanctioning arrangements the Government have decided that the duty on jaggery arrack be raised from Bh. Rs. 4-8 to Bh. Rs. 4-12 and on toddy arrack from Bh. Rs. 8-9-6 to Bh. Rs. 8-12-0 per proof gallon ; that the number of liquor shops be reduced from 1,835 to 1,754. But perhaps what the general public will look upon as more important is the interesting experiment of local option to be made at Changanacherry.

9. Season and Trade. A slight deficiency in the north-east monsoon and the too early setting in of the south-west monsoon affected the paddy crops to some small extent. But, on the whole, the season was beneficial,

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